

European Science, Engineering and Technology Highlights¹ APRIL 2015

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¹ Note: If you would like additional information or background, please feel free to contact either Carine Polliotti at cpolliot@nsf.gov

1 Europe's research commissioner lays out his ambitions - Carlos Moedas on European funding models, diplomacy and scientific advice



Carlos Moedas wants to improve the working lives of scientists.

Last November, Portuguese engineer-turned-economist Carlos Moedas was plucked from managing his country's budget-cutting austerity program to take charge of the research portfolio at the European Commission in Brussels.

Five months into his five-year term as research commissioner, Moedas spoke to Nature about his hopes and ambitions for the scientific programs run by the European Union (EU), particularly the huge seven-year €80-billion (US\$86-billion) Horizon 2020 (H2020) research program, which runs until 2020. Moedas wants scientists to

change their mentality for H2020, breaking free of individual silos and including more social science.

Full article available at:

<http://www.nature.com/news/europe-s-research-commissioner-lays-out-his-ambitions-1.17165>



2 Europe: Different approaches to fees for international students



All Nordic countries offer free higher education to their citizens. Traditionally, international students have also been able to study for free in this region but in 2006 Denmark introduced tuition fees for international students coming from outside the European Union and the European Economic Area.

Then in 2011, the Swedish educational authorities also introduced this type of fee. The same measure was suggested by the central authorities in Finland and Norway, although abandoned after some

public debate.

In the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, higher education is basically publicly funded. In Denmark, Finland and Norway, some 95% of investment in tertiary education comes from public sources, according to the OECD report Education at a Glance 2014. In line with Nordic welfare state ideology, the opportunity to enter higher education should be equal for all citizens.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20150331054410125>



3 Germany: DFG - 18 New Priority Programs



Subjects Range from Turbulent Flows and Innate Lymphoid Cells to the Rise in Sea Levels and Organizational Forgetting /

Approximately 105 Million Euros for Three Years

The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) will establish 18 new Priority Programs, in which researchers will investigate fundamental scientific questions in particularly topical or emerging areas of research over the next few years.

The new Priority Programs were selected by the Senate of the DFG – Germany's largest research funding organization and central self-governing organization for the research community –in Bonn from a total of 87 initiatives. This represents 15 more initiatives than the previous year, indicating a very high interest in the Priority Programs a funding instrument.

Full article available at:

http://www.dfg.de/en/service/press/press_releases/2015/press_release_no_10/index.html



4 Hungary: Number of students admitted falls 20% since 2010



The number of students admitted to higher education institutions in Hungary has fallen by over 20% since 2010, according to a report issued by the Center for International Higher Education Studies.



This makes Hungary one of the few OECD member states in which the number of higher education students has declined over the past four years.

Although figures are still unavailable for the year 2015, experts do not expect a large increase in the number of applicants and claim that rapid changes in rules applying to university and college admissions have had a negative effect on students' willingness to study in higher education.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20150403112018354>



5 Ukraine joins Horizon 2020 to work with EU in science and research



European Commissioner Carlos Moedas (left) and Ukrainian education and science minister Serhii Myronovych Kvit exchange signatures in Kiev

Researchers, businesses and innovators from Ukraine will now be able to fully participate in Horizon 2020, the European Union's research and innovation funding program, on equal terms with EU Member States and other associated countries. This is thanks to the Agreement for the Association of Ukraine to Horizon 2020, signed on March 20, 2015 in Kyiv by Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, and Serhiy Kvit, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine

Full article available at:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-4640_en.htm?locale=en

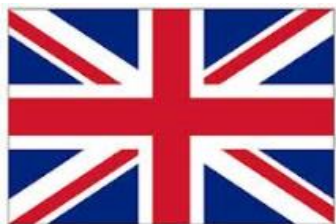
Additional information available at:

<http://www.nature.com/news/ukraine-joins-flagship-european-research-programme-1.17164>

<http://news.sciencemag.org/europe/2015/03/ukraine-joins-e-u-research-club-steep-discount>



6 United Kingdom: Widening access to Scottish universities



More school pupils from the poorest areas are being admitted to Scotland's universities despite many falling short of the exam grades they would normally need, official figures have suggested. A report by the Scottish Funding Council found the proportion of students from the country's most deprived communities has increased to 13.4% following a drive to "widen access". Angela Constance, the Scottish cabinet secretary for education, praised the figures as evidence of the "progress" being made on Nicola

Sturgeon's goal that every child should have an "equal chance" of attending university.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20150403111558511>



7 United Kingdom: Universities at risk of falling short on investment



England's universities risk being "unable to deliver the scale of investment" needed to "remain internationally competitive". That is the warning from the Higher Education Funding Council for England, which says in a report on 2013-14 sector finances, published late last month, that without increased surpluses and continued government support such a risk is present.

The sector's results from that year show "a financially sound position overall", says the report, titled Financial Health of the Higher Education Sector: Financial results and TRAC outcomes 2013-14.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20150403112801947>

